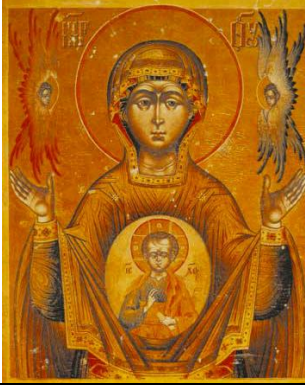


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



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SUNDAY OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD 25 December 2011

FIRST ANTIPHON

I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart, in the council of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord!

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Sought out in all the things that he hath willed; confession and majesty are His work, and His righteousness abideth unto ages of ages! (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Refrain)

SECOND ANTIPHON

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight. His seed shall be mighty upon the earth; the generations of the upright shall be blessed! Refrain: O Son of God, Who art born of a Virgin, save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"! [NOTE THE NEW MELODY]

Glory and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness abides unto ages of ages! (Refrain)

There hath risen up in darkness a light for the upright; he is merciful and compassionate and righteous! (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of thy feet; the Lord shall send to you a scepter of power from Zion; with Thee is dominion in the day of Thy power, in the splendor of Thy saints. TROPARION OF THE NATIVITY (Tone 4): see below.

THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

"From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee." The Lord hath sworn and will not repent; Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek. O Son of God, Who art born of a Virgin, save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"! [NOTE THE NEW MELODY]

After the Little Entrance, sing:

TROPARION OF THE NATIVITY (Tone 4): Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world; for they that worshipped the stars from the star did learn to worship Thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know Thee, the East from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

Glory... Now and ever ...

KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY (Tone 3): The Virgin brings forth today the Omnipotent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One. Angels give glory with shepherds, and the magi journey with the star. Since for our sakes was born as a new babe He Who is from eternity God.

VARIABLES OF THE NATIVITY LITURGY

- **Trisagion:** Instead of “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal ...”, sing:
As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Alleluia!

- **The Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos):**
Instead of “It is truly meet ...”, sing:
(Tone 1): *Magnify, O my soul, her that is more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly powers! A strange and marvelous mystery do I behold: the cave is a heave, and the Virgin is cherubic throne; the manger is a grand space wherein Christ our God, whom nothing contain, is laid as a babe—Him do we praise and glorify!*

- **Koinonikon (Communion verse):** *The Lord hath sent redemption to his people, Alleluia!*

- **After communion:**
Instead of “We have seen the true Light ...”, sing the Troparion of the Nativity
(Tone 4): *Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world! For they that worshipped the stars from the star did learn to worship Thee, O Sun of Justice, and to know Thee, the East from on High: O Lord, glory to Thee!*

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Let all the on earth worship Thee and chant unto Thee.
Shout with jubilation unto the Lord, all the earth!*

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians
(Gal 4:4-7)

Brethren: when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba, Father." Therefore you are no longer a bond-servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew
(Matthew 2:1-12)

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, are by no means least among the rulers of Judea; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern My people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found Him bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came to rest over the place where the

child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

A WORD ON TODAY'S CELEBRATION

What can one add to the clear words to the Apostle? **“God sent forth his Son ... in order that we might receive the adoption as sons.”** The Tradition has rephrased this great and unbelievable revelation by saying that “God became man so that man may become deified.” One of the principles of the Orthodox faith is that whatever we see in Christ, our Lord, is destined for us, his followers. If He is God-made-man, we are called to be humans-made-God: we are called to “deification.” If God takes on himself the frail and sinful human nature, and becomes a baby, it is—as the hymn says—*for our sake*.

As we heard before, God became one of us not because *He* needed it, but so that *we* might again rejoin the Father’s household. If, therefore, the Creator was made flesh for us, and if we are so precious in God’s eyes—**“not a bond-servant, but a son!”**—let us open ourselves up for His work in us. This mean that we should not deny our calling as human beings. Let us not think of ourselves as lower than children of God, for **God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father!***

Christmas is not a yearly commemoration of some event that happened long time ago, in a distant place. We celebrate the Nativity as the beginning of our own journey with Christ. What do we, the host, offer this heavenly guest who wants to be with us not only for a night, but forever one of us? The angels and the shepherd give glory, and the magi bring their gifts to Bethlehem, the earth itself offers a cave. As for us, the Liturgy suggests the following: “let us commend ourselves and our whole life unto Christ, our God!”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We will be collecting money for the nuns of Holy Transfiguration Monastery over the next Sundays until they will be our guests on January 15th.

Sunday, Jan. 15: The nuns of Holy Transfiguration Monastery will join us for the celebration of our patron saint, Anthony the Great, the father of monasticism. We will also extend hospitality to our brothers and sisters from the other two Orthodox parishes. Note that the nuns do not eat meat!

SAT, 12/31: No Vespers!

SUN, 1/ 1: Divine Liturgy and blessing of the civil new year, **10:30 am.**

Note the later hour!

THURSDAY, 5 January, 7pm: Vesperal Liturgy for the feast of Theophany.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

LIVING: Joseph (Rose's father), Bishop John (Abdallah), Abie (Abraham), Victoria (Frank's mother), Diane, Sula, Bill, Norm, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Ed, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Justin, Sara, Jeaneen, Lorine, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna.

DEPARTED: Bob (Diane's father), George (Botsis), Michael, priest James, Gabriel, Eduard, Lance, Nancy, Peter, Michael, William, James, Mary Ann, Michael.